

КОНФЕРЕНЦИЯ  
«ОБУЧЕНИЕ В ТЕЧЕНИЕ ВСЕЙ ЖИЗНИ —  
LIFE LONG LEARNING:  
ДОПОЛНИТЕЛЬНОЕ ОБРАЗОВАНИЕ  
КАК ФАКТОР ЛИЧНОСТНОГО  
И ПРОФЕССИОНАЛЬНОГО РАЗВИТИЯ»

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**LIFE LONG LEARNING AND THE RECOGNITION  
OF INFORMALLY ACQUIRED SKILLS**

The article describes an assessment tool which adult educators could use to measure professional competences acquired in the scope of their initial training. The developed instrument — a competence pass-serves objective competence identification and creation of competence profiles. Acceptance of competences by the European educational community enables a comparison of required and achieved professional skills and is the prerequisite for recognition and certification of the practitioners.

**Key words:** competence assessment, adult educators, qualifications, vocational training, further education, transnational mobility, educational institutes.

**1. Introduction**

We come across competences in multiple ways: naturally, we speak of competences and competent actions. Competences are not restrained to a certain age or certain professions. On this note, one could assume that competences possess an egalitarian aspect. It is expected that children acquire competences already in pre-school or primary school age. Recently, I came across the headline “Competent Infant” [3]. Likewise, it is expected that tasks and challenges in the work place are “competently” accomplished. While the existence of competences is regarded as certain, their description is very arguable. Multiple attempts of descriptions underline this. Competences are neither present per se nor are they an inalterable entity. Competences are not only distributed inter-individually differently; competent acting, i.e. the performance of the competence, can also vary at different times for the same task.

Competences must be acquired; however, it remains largely obscure when exactly which competence has been acquired. Therefore, in our project, we pursue the method to measure competences where they become apparent, namely during the performance of a certain task, independently from how and where they have been acquired.

Adult educators face high demands. They need to posse a high degree of expert knowledge, be trained in didactics and methods, be able to answer questions of participants, interested people or other instances satisfyingly and competently and much more. The high demands of the occupation and the very heterogeneous access to the vocational field of adult education only hint at the various difficulties the scientific work has to deal with.

The idea for the development of an instrument for the identification of adult educators' competences is closely connected to the need of practitioners to make their competences in the vocational field of adult education apparent and thus transparent. This is mainly caused by the fact that not all practitioners in the field possess a formal academic education but still hold the necessary competences. Making these non-formally acquired competences apparent was the main goal of the project.

The need to make non-formally acquired competences apparent underlines a general trend towards making "additional qualifications, competences, knowledge, skills and proficiencies" apparent that "have not (exclusively) been acquired in the scope of a formal (initial) training" [7, 295].

Burkhart Sellin names the following factors for this:

- the quickened renewal of knowledge,
- the connected technological and specialist renewal of requirement profiles,
- changes in the work organization and
- work distribution including work place hierarchies.

"As a result, new and additional ways of competence identification, validation and accreditation become necessary, which are already developing, if initially seemingly uncontrolled" [Ibid]. For some years now, particular attention has been paid to this visualization and recognition of informally acquired competences in the field of adult education as well as vocational training and further education [8, 6, 5, 4]. These competences can add great potential to the process of obtaining occupational competence [5]. A study of the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research has counted more than 50 competence passes on the German market although the standard of these varies strongly in terms of content as well as method [1]. Furthermore, previous efforts have not been explicitly directed towards the identification of adult educators' competences. In order to close this research gap the Competence Pass was developed, tested as well as adapted to one of the major German professional further education facilities.

## **2. Acquisition of competences in the context of international efforts to standardize the recognition of informally acquired skills**

For some time now, attempts have been made on an international level to acknowledge and validate learning outcomes that have been acquired beyond formal educational institutions [2]. The urgency of this problem especially grew after the so-called "competence turn", i.e. the conversion from an input-towards an output orientation within the field of education. It is not about the place and time of acquiring a competence but rather about the ability to solve a certain problem. This conversion implicated the necessity to develop instruments which can ensure this competence assessment and which are internationally recognized.

At the same time shall the informally acquired skills be equated to the formally acquired ones? In December 2004, the Secretaries of Education of 32 European countries have therefore agreed (Maastricht-Kommuniqué) to develop a common European Qualification Framework (see [http://ec.europa.eu/eqf/home\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/eqf/home_en.htm)). The EQF sees itself as a Meta Qualification Framework which connects the qualification systems of various countries and thus enables more transparency within the educational landscape. The individual countries are responsible for the realization. The EQF functions as a means of orientation and may be adapted according to different demands.

The aim is that each qualification in each state of the European Union can be related to the EQF. The frame consists of eight reference levels which are defined by a number of descriptors. Each descriptor describes Learning Outcomes which are required to achieve the respective qualifications for a certain niveau. Learning Outcomes are not directly allocated to the EQF but instead first to the niveau of a National Qualification Framework which is adequate to the EQF niveau. The main objectives of this project are:

- I. Promoting transnational mobility;
- II. Supporting lifelong learning.

The realization of the NQF is very different within the individual countries. Some countries such as Finland have developed a comprehensive system for the recognition of informally acquired skills. In other countries such as Germany and Austria, serious discussions are held on the equality of formally and informally acquired skills (see: [http://ec.europa.eu/eqf/compare\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/eqf/compare_en.htm)).

The example that is presented in the following is an instrument for the visualization and recognition of such informally acquired learning results.

### **3. What is the objective of the competence pass for adult educators and which aims are pursued?**

In a generalized sense there are four main objectives:

- development of adequate instruments/ methods to comprise competences of the people employed in adult education;
- documentation and systematization of competences of adult educators to render a comparison of required and existing competences possible and to enable institutes of adult education to reliably comprise their employees' competences;
- compilation of a manual regarding the utilization of the competence pass;
- the competence balancing is supposed to enable adult educators to increase their professional mobility through the recognition of their not formally acquired competences and thus to strengthen their employability internationally or at least within the EU.

### **4. Who benefits from a competence pass?**

The benefits on the micro- as well as on the mesa level are obvious; however, does one focus on the broad impact, effects can also be found on the social macro level

resulting from a rise of labour mobility and a strengthening of employability even if results are weaker than on the levels below.

1. People employed in adult education: The competence pass gives adult educators the opportunity to identify their professional competences. It becomes obvious in which diverse work situations adult educators are employed and how diverse the requirements for this occupation are. The preoccupation with one's own work furthers self-reflecting processes and thus strengthens the professional self-esteem. Personal development needs can also be identified with the detected levels of specific adult educational competences. This enables the adult educator to choose and attend adequate further or continuing trainings and thus to increase the level of the respective competence.

2. Institutes of adult education: With the help of the competence pass, institutes of adult education can control and further personnel decisions such as hiring or the selective assignment of professionals. Also, internal trainings can be directed more purposefully. The pass can furthermore be used as manual for personnel talks.

3. Certifiers and public authorities: Here, the compass can function as the basis for their evaluation, e.g. for personnel certification. The pass can also enhance existing quality management systems.

4. People interested in continuing education: People interested in continuing education profit from the increased quality of training effected by the use of the competence pass.

## **5. Method and development**

First step:

We defined an understanding of the term "competence" which is decidedly targeted at the requirements of adult educational acting. For this, common competence understandings have been critically evaluated and reviewed for their usefulness for the competence pass. Our definition of Competence: Competence becomes evident in dispositions of acting. Competence becomes apparent in the actions of a person in typical work situations. A competence can be existent in different degrees. Competences can be obtained in different ways.

In the course of our work, five adult educational competences have emerged:

— Professional and societal competence refers to the professional control of content and topics of a training program including substantiated scientific background knowledge as well as to a broad general knowledge on the part of the adult educator, especially to an understanding of current societal, political and educationally relevant topics.

— Pedagogical-didactical competence/media competence refers to the didactics and methods of teaching. It comprises the ability to professionally plan, hold and evaluate lessons/ seminars and to ensure training success and supervision. Media competence describes the ability to work professionally with available technical means. This is supposed to ensure an ideal preparation and presentation of learning topics.

— Personal/social/reflexive competence describes abilities like empathy, perseverance, concentration, motivation, social-communicative and other personal dispositions that are of great importance in the scope of adult education. Reflexive competence

refers to the self-reflexion of the adult educator as well as to the ability to recognize and evaluate general contexts and other function contexts in organization and institutions.

— Organization and management competence comprises commercial and strategic thinking and acting in regard to businesses and organizations. This includes comprehensive abilities in financial planning, business and personnel development, project planning, execution and evaluation, controlling, training planning, cooperation forms and other possibilities of strategic cooperation.

— Counseling competence/mentoring competence refers to the areas of career and education counseling and the assistance for clients, furthermore to the counseling of persons in adult education and to guidance for actual and potential clients as well as organizations such as public authorities, societies, chambers and ministries.

Second step:

— Following a research phase in institutes of adult education, a typology of relevant adult educational competences was created, based on typical work situations of adult educators.

— Systematization of work situations: Due to preliminary works in the scope of a habilitation empirical results regarding typical work situations of adult educators could be used. To engross and specify these results we executed our own research, which included the examination of ten adult educators in different terms of employment and with different key activities.

The following eleven work situations have been determined:

- I. Preparation of Lessons
- II. Holding Lessons
- III. Follow-up of Lessons
- IV. Educational Counseling
- V. Testing and Developing of Teaching Materials
- VI. Concept Development
- VII. Project Management
- VIII. Personnel Development
- IX. Networking
- X. Educational Controlling
- XI. Public Relations

Third step:

To identify the level of each competence, competence indicators have been compiled. To determine the level of a competence, indicators have been developed that refer to the completion of adult educational tasks in different work situations. These serve the determination of the competence level with the use of certain standards. We act on the assumption that a competence does not follow the all-or-none principle but can be developed in varying degrees. This fact establishes the opportunity to strengthen and thus to increase a marginally developed competence through targeted measures.

Fourth step:

The feasibility and acceptance of the pass are currently tested and evaluated in selected Saxon institutes of adult education: an adult education center (Volkshochschule) an institution of confessionnal adult education an institution of rural adult education as well as an institution of vocational further education.

## 6. Example

The work situation of “Educational Counseling” is supposed to illustrate the approach:

**Work Situation:** “Educational Counseling” including its ascribed competences and indicators.

**Description:** Pedagogical counseling of persons and institutions regarding their desire of and need for further education; the stress is on information and counseling, special addressing of target groups and institutions.

This work situation requires two competences: *Counseling and mentoring competence* as well as *personal/social/reflexive competence*. The presented indicators are not complete due to reasons of clarity.

Generally, the adult educator only evaluates these indicators that apply to him/her. Other indicators are omitted and do not influence the final evaluation. A free line enables the adult educator to add an individually important indicator.

We use an evaluation in four categories:

- I. fully applies
- II. partly applies
- III. somewhat applies
- IV. does not apply

The following image shows examples for indicators for the counseling and mentoring competence as well as for the personal/social/reflective competence:

Volkswagen Bildungsinstitut GmbH					
<b>Arbeitsituation:</b> Bildungsberatung <b>Beschreibung:</b> Beinhaltet die Beratung von Personen sowie Institutionen hinsichtlich ihrer Bildungswünsche und -bedürfnisse.					
Kompetenzindikatoren	1	2	3	4	
<b>Beratungskompetenz/ Begleitungskompetenz</b>					
Ich kenne den Beratungsgegenstand (z. B. das Bildungsangebot meiner Einrichtung, die Zugangsvoraussetzungen zu Lehrgängen und die finanziellen Fördermöglichkeiten für Bildungsteilnehmende).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Ich nehme regelmäßig an Weiterbildungen im Bereich Bildungsberatung teil.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Ich bin mit ---Beratungsansätzen (z. B. nach Rogers, Phasenmodell, informative/ situative/ biografieorientierte Beratung) vertraut.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Ich grenze Beratung von Auskunft und Information, aber auch von Therapie ab.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Ich achte darauf, dass Bildungsberatung ein Orientierungsangebot und eine Unterstützung bei der Entscheidungsfindung darstellt.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Ich bespreche und vereinbare zu Beginn der Beratung mit den Ratsuchenden die Ziele des Gesprächs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Ich verweise an zuständige Stellen, wenn der Beratungswunsch den Rahmen meiner Möglichkeiten überschreitet.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Ich gestalte aktiv den Gesprächsverlauf einer Beratung, indem ich z. B. durch Fragen leite, getroffene Aussagen unformuliere und das Gespräch angemessen schließe.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Ausprägungsgrad der Beratungskompetenz</b>	Ø				
1=Vollständig 2=Vollständig 3=Vollständig 4=Vollständig 5=Vollständig 6=Vollständig 7=Vollständig 8=Vollständig 9=Vollständig 10=Vollständig 11=Vollständig 12=Vollständig 13=Vollständig 14=Vollständig 15=Vollständig 16=Vollständig 17=Vollständig 18=Vollständig 19=Vollständig 20=Vollständig 21=Vollständig 22=Vollständig 23=Vollständig 24=Vollständig 25=Vollständig 26=Vollständig 27=Vollständig 28=Vollständig 29=Vollständig 30=Vollständig 31=Vollständig 32=Vollständig 33=Vollständig 34=Vollständig 35=Vollständig 36=Vollständig 37=Vollständig 38=Vollständig 39=Vollständig 40=Vollständig 41=Vollständig 42=Vollständig 43=Vollständig 44=Vollständig 45=Vollständig 46=Vollständig 47=Vollständig 48=Vollständig 49=Vollständig 50=Vollständig 51=Vollständig 52=Vollständig 53=Vollständig 54=Vollständig 55=Vollständig 56=Vollständig 57=Vollständig 58=Vollständig 59=Vollständig 60=Vollständig 61=Vollständig 62=Vollständig 63=Vollständig 64=Vollständig 65=Vollständig 66=Vollständig 67=Vollständig 68=Vollständig 69=Vollständig 70=Vollständig 71=Vollständig 72=Vollständig 73=Vollständig 74=Vollständig 75=Vollständig 76=Vollständig 77=Vollständig 78=Vollständig 79=Vollständig 80=Vollständig 81=Vollständig 82=Vollständig 83=Vollständig 84=Vollständig 85=Vollständig 86=Vollständig 87=Vollständig 88=Vollständig 89=Vollständig 90=Vollständig 91=Vollständig 92=Vollständig 93=Vollständig 94=Vollständig 95=Vollständig 96=Vollständig 97=Vollständig 98=Vollständig 99=Vollständig 100=Vollständig					

## 7. Summary

Identification and acceptance of competences are an opportunity to increase professionalism in the field of adult education. Additionally, adult educational competences become more transparent for different users. Aim of the project “Competence Pass for Adult Educators” was the development of instruments that serve objective competence identification and documentation in adult education and the creation of competence profiles. Furthermore, it serves the compilation of adult educators’ competences to enable a comparison of required and present competences and thus to allow educational institutes to identify safely their employees’ competences. The identification of adult educational competences is the prerequisite for their recognition and certification.

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**Я. Бём**

## ОБУЧЕНИЕ В ТЕЧЕНИЕ ВСЕЙ ЖИЗНИ И ПРИЗНАНИЕ НЕФОРМАЛЬНО ПОЛУЧЕННЫХ НАВЫКОВ

В статье описывается механизм измерения профессиональных компетенций, приобретенных специалистами, занятыми в сфере образования для взрослых. Разработанная автором методика способствует идентификации неформально приобретенных навыков и созданию профилей педагогических компетенций, необходимых для профессиональной аттестации и дальнейшего признания специалиста на европейском уровне.

**К л ю ч е в ы е с л о в а:** измерение компетенций, специалисты, занятые в образовании для взрослых, квалификация, профессиональное обучение, дополнительное образование, европейская мобильность, образовательные учреждения.

Считается, что компетенции приобретаются уже начиная с детского возраста, детского сада или начальной школы. Несмотря на то что само понятие